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Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Macroeconomic policy questions

Operational activities for development

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Letter dated 8 March 2006 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Paris Consensus and the Statement on United Nations Reform adopted by the thirty-ninth Meeting of the Chairpersons/Coordinators of the Chapters of the Group of 77, held in Paris on 27 and 28 February 2006 (see annexes I and II).

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would appreciate it if the present letter and its annexes could be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda items 46, 50, 57, 116, 118 and 120.

(*Signed*) Dumisan S. **Kumalo**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the
Republic of South Africa to the United Nations
Chairman of the Group of 77

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Annex I to the letter dated 8 March 2006 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Paris Consensus

Adopted by the thirty-ninth Meeting of the Chairpersons/ Coordinators of the Chapters of the Group of 77, held in Paris on 27 and 28 February 2006

1. We, the Chairpersons/Coordinators of the Chapters of the Group of 77, meeting in Paris on 27 and 28 February 2006, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Dumisani Shadrack Kumalo, Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa to the United Nations and Chairman of the Group of 77 in New York, state our collective commitment as follows.

2. We are meeting at a time of great challenges and expectations. The continuing poverty affecting most of our countries remains a major threat to our future stability and growth, as well as to international cooperation, peace and stability.

3. We emphasize the need to continue strengthening the unity and solidarity among countries of the South, to increase our voice in the governance of development which is conducive to a more just and equitable international order and for preserving one that nurtures the policy space necessary for developing countries to pursue their own development objectives.

4. The increasing disparity between the rich and the poor, economic regression and unprecedented natural disasters have compounded genuine efforts to overcome the scourge of poverty. We remain however committed to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and will make every effort in the centres of our chapters to ensure that progress is made as matter of priority for the concerned organizations and their work programmes.

5. The political changes, the information revolution and technological advances of the last decade have provided a stronger basis for economic growth. We stress the need to increase the capacity of developing countries in science and technology, including in information and communications technology and in new and emerging technologies.

6. While the results of the last World Trade Organization ministerial meeting could not be translated into concrete and positive actions in favour of developing countries, we remain committed to rule-based multilateral trading system that is equitable, fair and takes into account developing countries' policy space.

7. We reiterate our appreciation to the Government of the State of Qatar for hosting the Second South Summit in Doha from 12 to 16 June 2005 and reaffirm our commitment to work towards the full implementation of the Doha Declaration and the Doha Plan of Action, in particular the strengthening of South-South cooperation.

8. We welcome the imminent submission to the Group of 77 of the proposed terms of reference for the South Fund for Development and Humanitarian Assistance established by the Second South Summit in order to strengthen South-South cooperation, including the institutional capacity of the Group of 77 and to

assist the countries of the South in their development efforts and to address the problems of hunger, poverty and natural disasters. In this context, we request the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation to assist in this process and provide management services to operationalize the fund.

9. Furthermore, the Second South Summit reaffirmed the role of South-South cooperation in the overall context of multilateralism as a continuing process, vital to confront the challenges faced by our countries, and as a valuable contribution to development. We know that today, South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation are one of the most important dimensions of international cooperation for development. From the Charter of Algiers adopted by the First Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77 in 1967 to the Declaration and Plan of Action of the Second South Summit in Doha much has been achieved. Today the level of awareness concerning the potential of South-South cooperation at both the government and the international community level is very significant.

10. We welcome the establishment by the Paris Chapter in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) of the South-South Cooperation Fund for Education, the South-South Cooperation Fund for Science and Technology and swap of external debt for investment in education and call for voluntary seed contributions to these Funds. We also believe that these Funds are eligible to receive future contributions from the South Fund for Development and Humanitarian Assistance established at the Second South Summit.

11. We welcome the decision of the General Conference of UNESCO to convene a South Forum on Culture, and we call on the Chairman of the Group of 77 to take the necessary steps with the Director-General of UNESCO in order to ensure the success of the Forum.

12. We strongly support the ongoing process of the implementation of the Second South Summit outcome carried out by various Group of 77 Chapters. Having identified priority areas of concern and competence of the different Chapters, we will make every effort and take necessary action to mainstream those areas in the work of various United Nations organizations. We shall seek those organizations' support and assistance in implementing the relevant recommendations of the Doha Summit.

13. We recognize the invaluable work of the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation in support of national efforts to strengthen South-South policy implementation. We believe that the United Nations development system is now better positioned to ensure that South-South cooperation becomes more central in the operational activities of many programmes and agencies.

14. We call for the establishment of the Trust Fund with contributions especially from the private sector, so that UNCTAD could undertake studies and programmes on issues of interest to the developing countries. This Trust Fund could, for instance, commission development impact assessment studies of existing international economic and trade agreements and norms and develop options for maximizing policy space for developing countries.

15. South-South cooperation is assuming increasing importance both as a strategy in support of development and as a means of ensuring the effective integration of developing countries in an emerging global economic order. We believe that there is a need to consolidate ongoing efforts, to further increase and raise resources,

particularly since we have identified priority areas for South-South cooperation. These priority areas will enhance developing countries capacity in global trade, science and technology and environmental and human settlement issues. We are committed to work for the institutional revival of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), to promote its work on operationalizing important concepts such as policy space and corporate social responsibility and to invigorate its intergovernmental machinery with a view to encouraging consensus building and making soft law to facilitate rule making in WTO and other organizations.

16. We stress the importance of elaboration of a development platform for the South as mandated by the Second South Summit, held in Doha from 12 to 16 June 2005 and look forward to continued collaboration with the South Centre and the completion of this project. We call further for enhancing the capacity of the South Centre.

17. In this context we welcome the ongoing efforts of the Chairman of the Group of 77 to convene sectoral meetings in accordance with the decision of the Second South Summit and the establishment of a follow-up mechanism for implementing specific South-South projects and initiatives presented to the Second South Summit.

18. We welcome the endorsement of the outcome of the Jakarta meeting on South-South cooperation by the Group of 77 Nairobi chapter which took place in November 2005. The meeting focused on South-South cooperation within the overall implementation process of the Bali Strategic Plan on Technology Support and Capacity-Building. We also support the over-arching action plan for South-South cooperation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) which provides the necessary grounding for mutually supportive cooperation initiation in the context of the Bali Strategic Plan.

19. We reaffirm that technical assistance should work in tandem with research and consensus building, it should not become the flagship project of UNCTAD. We express concern that the norms and the technical assistance programme of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) overemphasize the promotion of intellectual property rights standards at the expense of development dimensions. We shall continue to push for a Development Agenda to make WIPO more development-oriented.

20. We emphasize the relevant role of agriculture in developing countries' economies. Thus we call on UNESCO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to cooperate closely to promote rural education in order to foster more rapid development.

21. We call on FAO and other competent organizations to promote capacity-building in developing countries in order to meet the challenges of the spread of Avian flu.

22. We strongly believe that achieving the Millennium Development Goals on eradication of hunger and poverty and environmental sustainability will require intensified efforts by the United Nations system to promote greater capacity-building for rural development aimed at enhancing irrigation capacity, improved rain harvesting promoting sustainable fisheries and livestock methods.

23. We intend to be vigilant in monitoring the implementation of the decisions of the World Summit on the Information Society. In this context, we shall collectively influence the establishment of the proposed Internet Governance Forum. We shall ensure that the Forum addresses the development dimension of Internet governance and gives representation to developing countries as well as multi-stakeholders from the developing countries.

24. We strongly support the efforts of the Geneva Chapter to have the necessary support staff and space for the conduct of the activities of the Chapter in Geneva and call on UNCTAD to assist them in this regard in accordance with the decision (paragraph 12(a)) adopted by the Special Ministerial Meeting commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the Group of 77 held in New York in June 1994.

25. The work being done by the United Nations institutions in centres of the Group of 77 Chapters such as UNESCO, UNDP, UNEP, UNCTAD, FAO, IFAD, UNIDO and UN-Habitat, is tremendous and commendable and we reaffirm the roles and mandates of these institutions and agencies. We reiterate the importance of UNCTAD as the principal organization within the United Nations system for an integrated treatment of trade and development, and we commit ourselves to ensure that the United Nations reform process shall not dilute its mandate, supplant or subsume it.

26. We are determined to improve the Group of 77 interface with the multi-media and to ensure that its message receives the widest public attention through the establishment of a global South news agency. We call for networking the media of the South to increase its effective capacity.

27. There are new and encouraging developments in the countries of the South that augur well for South-South cooperation. The emerging new dynamic economies of the South provide new and potential opportunities for taking South-South cooperation to a higher level of collective self-reliance through trade, investment and technological cooperation. In this context, we support the ongoing efforts by the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation in organizing important initiatives to boost South-South cooperation including the Global South Development Forum; the second High-level Forum on Trade and Investment; South-South Mayors Forum to Promote City to City Cooperation for Development; the Global South-South Assets and Technology Exchange system; the Global Southern Development Solutions Systems; the Global South Creative Economy Expo; as well as other public-private partnerships initiatives in new and dynamic sectors.

28. We also welcome the ongoing efforts by the Chairman of the Group of 77 in order to operationalize the Group of 77 research programme decided by the first South Summit and we call on member States and relevant United Nations institutions to support the programme particularly the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation to operationalize the pilot phase of the programme.

29. We welcome the efforts made so far in the creation of a consortium by the Trieste system in accordance with the Second South Summit decision. We welcome also the efforts made towards the creation of the joint scientific committee and we call on the Chairman of the Group of 77 in New York to take necessary steps in order to speed up the process and we call for networking of research institutions of the South.

30. We support the ongoing efforts for establishing bridges of cooperation among the cities of the South through "Twinning of the cities/Sisters cities" as well as the establishment of a parliamentarian forum of the South and a global South Academy for Development in order to strengthen further the Group's positions in international fora.

31. We shall deepen and expand our strategic partnerships with all actors of civil society, particularly those in developing countries.

32. We are committed to work very closely with the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries within the context of the Joint Coordinating Committee and to coordinate and harmonize our joint action at various United Nations centres especially in connection with the ongoing process of the United Nations reforms.

33. We recognize the respect for religious and cultural diversity in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/150. An increasingly globalizing world should contribute to international cooperation, promotes enhanced dialogue among religious cultures and civilizations, and helps to create an environment conducive to exchange of human experience. We are convinced that dialogue among cultures and civilizations should be continuous process and that, in the current international environment, it is not an option but an imperative as sound and productive tool to promote development to create a better life for all. This concept needs to be mainstreamed in the human rights machinery and UNESCO. In this respect we call upon UNESCO to support the convening of a high level forum of eminent personalities in order to discuss effective ways of bridging the gaps and achieving responsible governance.

34. We affirm that human rights should not be denuded of their economic and social content. Trade agreements should not be allowed to impede the ability of people to obtain affordable textbooks and medicines or make basic services such as water and sanitation unaffordable for large segments of the population. In this context, the discussions of the right to development need to be further invigorated in the proposed Human Rights Council.

35. We continue to stress the importance of a Group of 77/Group of Eight dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership as an essential mechanism for the discussion of emerging and urgent issues relevant to the strengthening of a global partnership for development to further strengthen the efforts of the international community in addressing development issues of international concern. In this context, we call on the forthcoming annual Summit of the Group of Eight, to be held in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, to take into account the interests and concerns of developing countries and request the Chairman of the Group of 77 as mandated by the South Summit, to convey those interests and concerns to the Group of Eight Summit.

36. We stand in full support of the position of the Group of 77 and China on United Nations reform, under the able leadership of the Republic of South Africa as chair country of the Group of 77, in defending the interests of developing countries and ensuring the successful outcome of the reform process as well as safeguarding the integrity and Charter role of the General Assembly in this important process in accordance with decisions and guidance by the heads of State or Government of the Group of 77 at the Second South Summit held in Doha from 12 to 16 June 2005.

37. We agree to convene a meeting of the chapters of the Group of 77 at the ministerial level in September 2006 prior to the General Assembly session. Meanwhile we welcome the offer of the Vienna Chapter to host the fourtieth meeting in June 2006 as well as the offer by the Rome Chapter to host the forty-first meeting in Rome in February 2007.

38. We wish to express our deep appreciation and gratitude to the excellent preparation and manner in which the Paris Chapter hosted the thirty-ninth Meeting of the Chairpersons/Coordinators of the Chapters of the Group of 77.

Annex II to the letter dated 8 March 2006 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement by the Chairmen/Coordinators of the Chapters of the Group of 77 on United Nations Reform, Paris, 28 February 2006

1. We, the Chairmen/Coordinators of the Chapters of the Group of 77, meeting in Paris on 27 and 28 February 2006, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Dumisani Shadrack Kumalo, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations and Chairman of the Group of 77 in New York, have reviewed the ongoing United Nations reform process and declare the following:

2. On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, we attach high priority to the reform of the United Nations as an ongoing process and not an end in itself in accordance with the parameters for the objective and scope of the review exercise set out by the World Summit Outcome document.

3. We see the objective of the reform as a means to strengthen the Organization, so that it can efficiently respond to the current and future challenges affecting the international community, in particular those concerns and interests of developing countries which constitute the vast majority of its membership.

4. We reaffirm that this process should be aimed at strengthening multilateralism, providing the Organization with a substantive capacity to fully and effectively meet the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and at consolidating its democratic character and its transparency in the discussion and implementation of decisions of Member States.

5. We will strive in the United Nations to develop its full potential and address urgent and serious economic and social problems facing developing countries. We reiterate the importance of the United Nations as the central forum for dialogue and negotiations on issues relating to international cooperation for development. We attach great political importance to the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in promoting international cooperation for economic and social development. We strongly believe that the United Nations should be allowed to develop its full potential in the field of international economic cooperation. To that end, the realization of the right to development should be given utmost priority by the United Nations.

6. We stress the importance of mainstreaming development dimension in the ongoing process of reform of the United Nations, bearing in mind the aim of enabling the full participation of peoples from the South in the international decision and rule-making economic processes and ensuring their access to and enjoyment of the benefits of international economy.

7. We reiterate the need to enhance the global partnership for development that is necessary to fully realize the outcomes of all major United Nations summits and conferences in the economic, social and related fields. We reaffirm the role of the Economic and Social Council as a principal body for the promotion of development cooperation, coordination, policymaking, review and dialogue on international economic issues and for making recommendations on issues of economic and social development.

8. We emphasize that the objective of the United Nations reform is to strengthen and update the work of the Organization so that it responds to the contemporary requirements of Member States. The work of the Organization is geared towards implementing the legislative decisions and mandates adopted by the intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations.

9. We believe that it is imperative to stress that the final result of the exercise should be to ensure that the Organization is able to implement the entire range of its mandates more effectively and efficiently. We do not accept that the exercise is intended to change the intergovernmental nature of our decision-making, oversight and monitoring processes. Neither is it to reduce the budget levels of the Organization or to fund more activities from within the existing pool of resources, nor is it meant to redefine the roles and responsibilities assigned to the various organs of the United Nations by the Charter.

10. We reiterate our support for the reform of the United Nations. Reform of the United Nations is a collective agenda and serves our common interests. We believe that the voice of every Member State must be heard and respected during this reform process irrespective of the contributions made to the budget of the organization.

11. We have always supported the efforts of the Secretary-General to ensure greater accountability of staff and our Group has called for the strengthening of the accountability framework of the United Nations and reforms to the systems of administration of justice and human resources management of the Organization.

12. We are committed to working with the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly to achieve the reform of the United Nations within the inter-governmental framework that the Organization provides. We believe that reform should be meaningful, strengthen the ability of the Organization to implement its mandates effectively and enable it to serve the interests of the collective membership. A stronger United Nations that responds more effectively to our collective needs is in our common interest.

13. We reaffirm the roles and mandates of United Nations institutions and agencies (UNCTAD, FAO, UNIDO, UNESCO, IFAD, UN-Habitat and UNEP) and we particularly reiterate the importance of UNCTAD as the principal organization within the United Nations system for an integrated treatment of trade and development, and we commit ourselves to ensure that the United Nations reform process shall not dilute its mandate, supplant or subsume it.

14. We attach importance for consultations aimed at developing a more coherent institutional framework for environment and human settlement activities in the United Nations system and express our determination that this process should result in strengthening or existing institutions and enhance the interest of developing countries.

15. We stand in full support of the position of the Group of 77 and China under the able leadership of Ambassador Dumisani Shadrack Kumalo, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, Chairman of the Group of 77, on United Nations reform, in defending the interests of developing countries and ensuring the successful outcome of the reform process as well as safeguarding the integrity and Charter role of the General Assembly in this important process in accordance with decisions and guidance by the Heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 at the Second South Summit held in Doha from 12 to 16 June 2005.